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► NASHUA

City owns site EPA deemed hazardous

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NASHUA The city is the new owner of what the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has described as one of the most environmentally hazardous properties in New England.

On Wednesday, the city took the deed to the former Johns-Manville asbestos plant at 40 Bridge and 10 Sanders streets for about \$231,000 in back taxes.

Former owner Joseph O'Murphy, of Woburn, Mass., had wanted the mayor and Board of Aldermen to forgive the back taxes so he could develop the property, but there weren't any steps taken to do that.

■ Johns-Manville asbestos plant seized because of unpaid back taxes; demolition to start next week

The city said it sent O'Murphy a letter Sept. 9, that told him he had to pay the back taxes by Wednesday at 5 p.m. or forfeit ownership.

Assistant Corporation Counsel Mary Anne Meuller said she was not aware whether O'Murphy tried to contact the city to pay the taxes. could not be reached for comment.

The EPA is conducting a \$5 million demolition and cleanup project on site. Local, state and federal officials have said 40 Bridge St. is structurally unsound and could release asbestos particles into the air

if the building collapses or catches on fire. Asbestos has been linked to cancer.

The smaller building at 10 Sanders St. was already torn down and the debris removed, according to EPA on-scene project coordinator Paul Groulx. The foundation remains, but the city has yet to dispose of pressure vessels on site.

Demolition crews will start tearing down 40 Bridge St. on Tuesday. In the next two months, Groulx said crews hope to demolish the rear portion of the building, excavate

two underground storage tanks and remove the pad beneath 10 Sanders St.

Depending on the weather, work crews will dismantle equipment on the roof of the building and spend the winter conducting pre-demolition activities inside, he said.

The 40 Bridge St. property is now valued at \$400, while 10 Sanders St. is valued at \$300. City officials said the values are low because the properties are not marketable.

The city could have taken the properties in 1992, but officials held off to avoid being held liable for the cleanup of environmental hazards on the site of the former asbestos plant.

Superfund Records Center
SITE: Johns-Manville
BREAK: 13.3
OTHER: 46 9996



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